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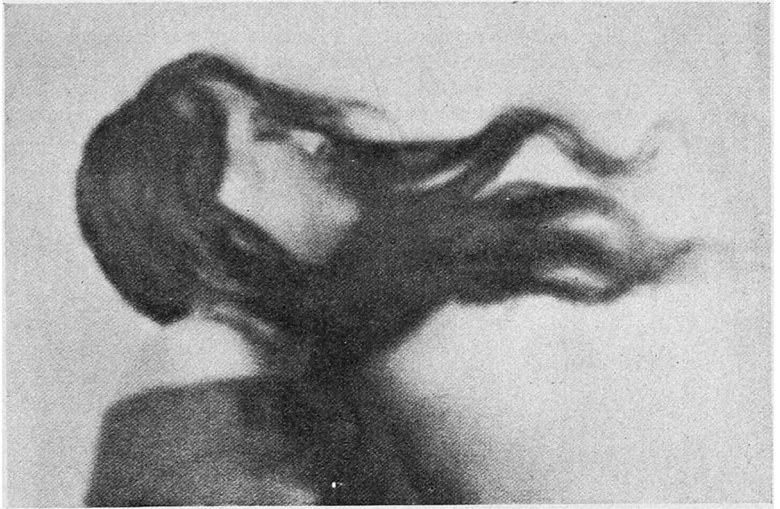
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MARCH

By F. E. Montererde

## SECOND CHICAGO PHOTOGRAPHIC SALON

It may be set down as a preface to a review of the second Salon of the Chicago Society of Amateur Photographers that there is no longer any doubt as to the field which the camera workers propose to possess, or any question as to the standards by which they assent to be judged. In former times it was regarded as quite proper to apologize for badly composed pictures on the ground that they were technically perfect photographs, or to condone faulty technique in matters of photography on the ground that artistic and not mechanical excellence had been sought. There was a confused idea of the principles which ought to be considered paramount in the product of the camera.

Happily there is no longer any uncertainty. The photographers have elected to be classed with the artists, and not with the opticians and chemists exclusively. They express their willingness to stand by the canons of art, for better or for worse, now and hereafter. They call to the seat of judgment over their works juries in which the artists are a majority and the photographers a minority.

They submit works which are as variant as possible from the traditional manner of photography. They obviously seek to conceal as far as they may the distinctive traits of the optical instrument which they employ. They resort to the use of special papers and pigments

in seeking to approximate the effects of the painter. Their ideal confessedly is the ideal of the painter, and not of the copyist or of the translator-etcher.

In considering the present Salon, this view of the matter has been taken. It is regarded as it stands, without reference to previous exhibitions of a similar character, without consideration for any limitations of the methods and media used—precisely as if it were a collection of works in gouache, charcoal, or black-and-white oils. And it may be said at the outset, and without equivocation, that the dominant note of the Salon is truly artistic.

For once we have a collection of more than one hundred and thirty photographs, not one of which demands an apology for its presence in the Art Institute. A large proportion of them might honorably grace the sketch-book of any versatile artist. Not a few of them, if translated to a larger scale, would be eligible as cartoons for the mural painter. And some may fairly claim, not the relative merit of an artist's preliminary study, but the positive distinction accorded to a perfect work of art—an achievement which neither addition nor subtraction could possibly better.

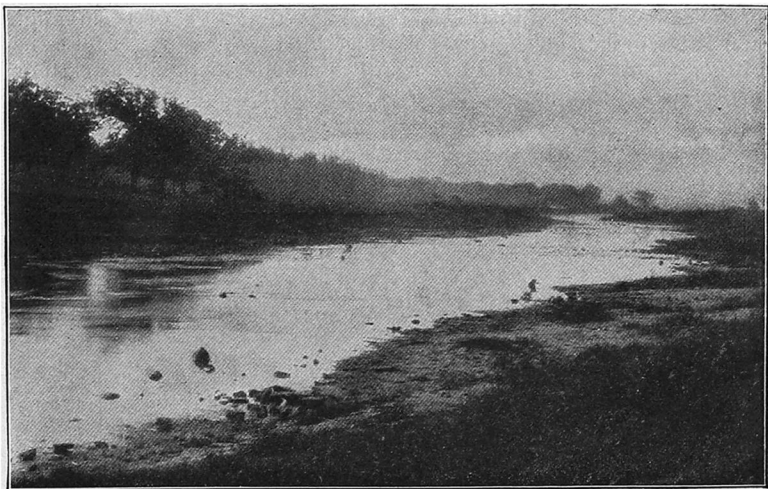


WHEN THE SUMMER FIELD IS MOWN

By A. E. Becker

As might be supposed, the salient defect of the pictures here collected is their want of spontaneity. If they were in oils, one would call them "painty." They convey the feeling that their production was often an arduous work, whereas the masterpieces of the greatest artists seem to have been done unconsciously, or at least without premeditation and contrivance. To be quite precise, we may say that there is in these pictures somewhat of the same experimental quality that we often observe in the etchings of men who "played on copper" for diversion from painting.

The fault just referred to is a natural defect in view of the devel-



MORNING ON THE DESPLAINES

By Herman Kuntzen

opmental stage of pictorial photography. It was conspicuous in the beginnings of the school of impressionists, and the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood never quite outgrew it. It is a mark of the intense effort which characterizes the apprentice period in any art or craft. Greater familiarity with the means and media will correct it.

As a natural concomitant of the difficulty just mentioned—this preoccupation with the technical part—there is not a little innocent affectation among these pictures. Some of them impress one as having been wrought with no higher purpose than to be superficially effective. They frequently lack the saving grace of ideality—that spiritual element which differentiates art from fine art. There is a tendency to conventionalize too far, a disposition to accord to the merely deco-

rative precedence over more vital beauty. They err in being too synthetical and too little analytical—seeking rather to throw a veil of beauty around things than to reveal the beauty which is inherent in things.

In fine, there is a somewhat theatrical flavor about a good deal of the work of this Salon. Effects are forced. You cannot well escape the conviction that much of what you find here was designed scrupulously with reference to the connoisseurs who were to judge it. It fails to impress you as the intensely sincere outpouring of hearts and minds full of the conviction of beauty and truth. But we have ample ground for the belief that all these faults are merely incidental to the growth of the new school of pictorial photography.

From the evidences at hand, one may confidently assert that each succeeding year will show its increment of all the higher qualities of art, and one may foresee for no remote time the exaltation of photography to the plane of the supremely creative arts.

After this rather extended arraignment of the Salon, the reader may be inclined to ask whether any good thing can come out of further study of it. Why assert in the beginning that the collection is artistic, only to add a long category of the points in which it falls short of the best in art? The answer is, that we have undertaken a criticism of the Salon according to the absolute canons of the fine arts, none excepted. To determine at once wherein there is a general departure from the highest principles is to simplify further discussion of the purely technical laws. The average of the Salon is extremely good in this respect. To quote one of the painter-jurors will give a clear idea of the general excellence of the entire body of the submitted work. He said:



PEACE ON EARTH  
By Laura M. Adams

"It has been my privilege to serve on several juries of selection for exhibitions of paintings. I will say that the average quality of the rejected pictures of this Salon is much above the average of the



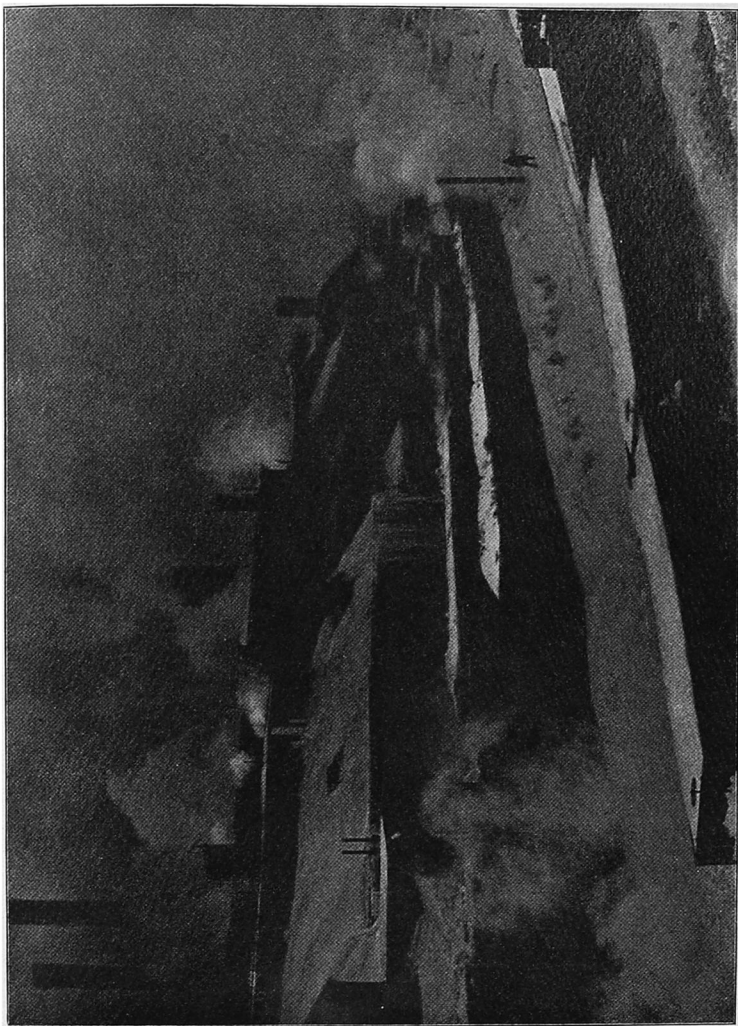
STUDY HEAD AND HAND  
By Arnold Genthe

paintings which I have seen declined by juries. There is scarcely a work among the rejected photographs which is radically bad, very few which might not have passed if the conditions had been slightly less rigid; but I have seen many paintings submitted in competition which were absolutely bad, even ridiculous."

No one will seriously debate the doctrine that the prime essential of a work of art is unity of conception and expression. There must be a dominant idea or motive to the realization of which everything contributory maintains a subordinate relation. In the most commonplace product of the "art for art's sake" doctrine, this is no less true than in the noblest of masterpieces. Whether the conception be true or false does not now con-

cern us, but we may demand as a *sine qua non* that the central idea must be a supreme unit.

No more striking advance could be noted between the Salon of 1901 and that of 1900 than we observe in this respect. It is one of the most hopeful features of the present exhibition. A close

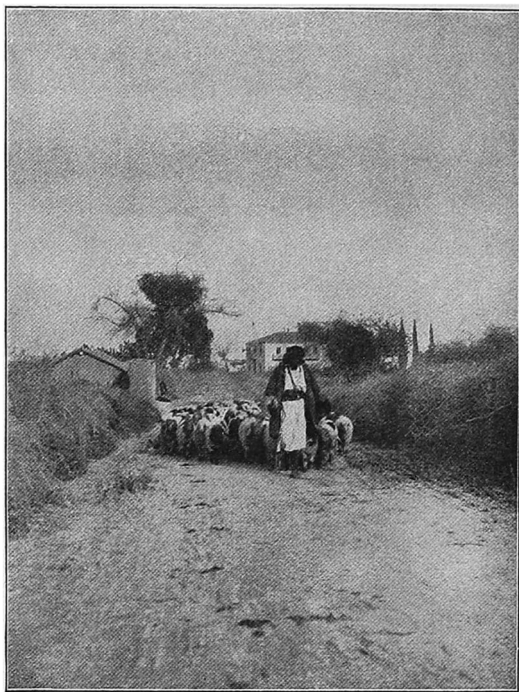


MIDST STEAM AND SMOKE  
By Prescott Adamson



corollary of this proposition is the second point we would advance: This Salon gives evidence of high average power in the matter of composition and great excellence in arrangement. It goes without saying that there can be no unity in a work which is badly composed, for the faults of its arrangement tend primarily to destroy unity.

To say that there is great finesse or originality in the organic schemes of the Salon generally would be to give it a rank too high for its deserts; but we may frankly assert that the time-honored structural motives have been employed without serious impairment, and in many instances with surprising effectiveness. In landscape, where composition is a problem of comparatively easy solution, the pictorial photographers have done admirably almost without exception. But it is much more conspicuous that some of the exhibitors have displayed positive mastery of the infinitely more subtle science of the figure and also of the nude.



"MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE"

By Henry S. Williams

We find works here which remind us of Dagnan-Bouveret at his best, and symphonies quite as delicious in their way as their prototypes by Whistler and Sargent. There is no want of the dynamic and dramatic elements in the best of the *genre* pieces, and there is, in a few conspicuous pictures, genuine inspirational quality, which any practiced eye will trace in due measure to the skill with which lines, masses, and values have been correlated. Delicate feeling of the limits and directions of lines and fine appreciation of the valency of



CONSOLATION  
By Virginia M. Prall

masses may be said to characterize the Salon.

We cannot fail to note, also, that there is a very tangible sensibility to the beauty which attaches to the position of an object in a given space. Scarcely any attention was paid to this matter by the old school of photography, but its vast importance will be obvious to any one who will take the trouble to study the portraits of Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Valasquez, or Franz Hals.

When composition enters the sphere of three dimensions we have to reckon with prob-

lems of ever-increasing intricacy and subtlety—chiaroscuro, aerial effects, tonality, and value. Here we might fear that the pictorial camerist would encounter fatal difficulties. Grave and manifold

indeed are the handicaps which the lens and chemical plate impose on the photographer. The painter and the musician may transpose or modulate the keys of natural harmony without sacrifice of truth or of effect, but the photographer is the slave of the deadly "ultra violet spectrum." He cannot transpose. He must wait until nature chooses the proper key and is "in tune." And this involves no less science than the make-up of a palette or the orchestration of pigments. Whether the camerist resort to ray screens during exposure, or manipulations of negative or print afterward, has nothing to do with our present discussion. All that concerns us is, that the results which are shown in the Salon evidence very complete mastery of the infinite problems of air and light.

There is not a picture among the one hundred and thirty of which it can be charged that it was "done in vacuo." Several interpret with superb truth those moods of nature in which "poetry clothes the earth as with a veil." Some casual critics have taken exception to the rendering of fog, rain, and snow exemplified in the Salon, but we venture the opinion that it is entirely consistent alike with natural phenomena and with the interpretation thereof by the greatest mas-



AN OFF-SHORE BREEZE  
By S. Stockton Hornor



IN SUNNY MAY

By E. M. Blaine

ters of atmosphere. It is at least safe to assume that Corot, Cazin, Monet, and Bastien-Lepage are legitimate exponents of aerial phenomena, and we may find among these photographs effects which will compare favorably with the models of these masters.

In point of tonality, therefore, we contend that the achievements of the new school of photography may justly claim artistic laurels. But the landscapists lead in this respect.

If anything is insisted on in art, it is nicety of adaptation of the means to the end. Here, too, we must concede that the photographers have acquired superior discrimination. The Salon presents pictures which are closely analagous in their treatment to the oil paintings of the old Dutch and Flemish schools. Others conform to the limitations of the aquarellists. Still others partake of the quality of etchings or mezzotints, and some have the sketchy character of chalk drawings. That the photographers are keenly appreciative of the just relation between the result sought and the means employed is a most significant fact, and one worthy of due consideration. It wellnigh justifies the postulate that photography has become, not a craft merely, but a fine art.

The instinctive exclusion of the extraneous and incidental, and the insistence on the unity and supremacy of the motive, have been referred to in justification of the contention that the photographers have added artistry to their artisanship.

We may venture a hope that the artists of the new mode of

expression will speedily gain that facility in its exercise which will permit them to enter the field of subjective art—the truly creative sphere; that they may become analysts of the beautiful as well as synthesists; that they may make their language more transcendental; that they may conceive loftier and profounder purposes; that they may make their art a force for the uplifting of humanity.

It is pleasant to believe that the Chicago Salon of 1901 may be an epoch-marker in such an evolution. In any event, the management and all the exhibitors, successful and otherwise, are to be congratulated. They have furthered a grand forward movement.

LOUIS ALBERT LAMB.



THE NET-MAKERS  
By S. Hudson Chapman